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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to examine whether training prospective supervisors in transactional analysis (TA) would affect their verbal interaction in supervisory conferences in comparison to a group of untrained prospective supervisors. The hypothesis was that supervisory students trained in TA would use more productive transactions in their interpersonal communication than would those who were not trained. A nonequivalent control group design involved a sample of 52 graduate students (all of whom were teachers) enrolled in introductory supervision classes. The experimental group received 16 weeks of training in TA communications skills. Supervisory tape simulations were used to gather verbal responses from both groups. Findings showed a significant difference between the productive response means of the experimental and control groups. TA training for instructional supervisors resulted in supervisors giving systematic, productive attention to interpersonal communication during a supervisory conference. The study has produced training materials for future use, and the validation of the study's methodology provides impetus for further studies. Knowledge gained from this study might be applied to teacher training programs as well as supervisory instruction. Appended are 15 references, 1 figure, and 4 tables. Appendices also include descriptions of the six transactional analysis ego states and a glossary of TA identifiers. (IW)

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The Effects of Training in Transactional Analysis on Supervisory Interpersonal Communication

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to examine whether a training program in transactional analysis for a group of prospective supervisors would affect their verbal interaction in supervisory conferences in comparison to a group of untrained prospective supervisors. A non-equivalent control group design was employed which involved a sample of 52 graduate students. The study tested the hypothesis that supervisory students trained in TA would use more productive transactions in their interpersonal communication than would those who were not. The treatment consisted of 16 weeks of training in transactional analysis. Supervisory tape simulations were used to gather verbal responses from both groups. The responses were rated as productive or non-productive by a four member panel using protocols based upon TA theory. An analysis of covariance was used to analyze the data. The findings of this study suggest that TA training for instructional supervisors resulted in supervisors giving systematic, productive attention to interpersonal communication during a supervisory conference. The results indicate that there was a significant difference ($p > .01$) between the productive response means of the experimental and control groups, when controlled for differences on the pre-test via analysis of covariance. In the final ANCOVA, 70% of the variance in the use of productive responses in the two groups could be explained by training in TA. This study has both statistical and practical significance.

The Effects of Training in Transactional Analysis on Supervisory Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal Communication in Supervision

Supervision is one dimension of organizational behavior in education which lends itself to a focused study of communication because supervision is first, and foremost, communication (Sergiovanni, 1983). The effective supervisor is the individual who is aware of all the elements that operate in a communication interaction (Jones, 1980). Current literature on supervisory style and communication suggests that in order for the supervisor to be effective, the supervisor must understand his/her own values, strengths, and needs. He/she must then utilize this information to communicate effectively to supervisees (Quinn, 1978). The more satisfactory this interaction, the more likely the supervisory activity will lead to productive results (Blumberg, 1970).

Issues in Supervisory Interpersonal Communication

To be certain, experts in the field of educational administration have conceptualized, studied, and documented the link between supervision and communication (Gibb, 1961; Blumberg, 1965, 1970; Lysaught, 1984). In doing so they have examined how a supervisee perceives interpersonal communication during a supervisory conference, and how that perception effects the productivity of the conference. They, however, have left the issue of the cognitive process of interpersonal communication unexplored, i.e., they have not examined the process by which the individual selects a mode of interpersonal communication by which to convey his/her supervisory message. Therefore a significant place to begin the task of studying

interpersonal communication in supervisory conferences might be with the cognitive activities involved in the formulation of productive supervisory communication. What is required for such a study is a theory of interpersonal communication which provides the conceptual tools for analyzing and assessing the effect interpersonal verbal activity has upon the outcome of supervisory communication within a conference setting.

A Theoretical Construct of Interpersonal Communication: TA

A theory of interpersonal communication which does meet these criteria is transactional analysis (TA). Transactional analysis, a process for individuals to gain self-awareness through a study of interpersonal communications, is an analytical process which addresses the conceptual issues of self-awareness; transactionalism, i.e., the dynamic of the situational context of communication; and cognitive scripts which undergird interpersonal communication. TA identifies each communication exchange as a transaction. TA suggests that each transaction, i.e., the content of each verbal exchange, is contingent upon the personalities of the individuals involved and the social, organizational, and psychological context within which the conversation takes place. It further suggests that an individual can learn to be cognitively aware of word usage and can thereby intentionally work to structure transactions. Transactional analysis is a parsimonious theory with three basic concepts: ego states (parent, adult, and child), transactions, and scripts. It provides people with self-awareness and insight into their own and other's behavior (Lysaught, 1984). Central to this process is the assumption that once aware of TA conepts, an individual can learn to communicate out of an ego

state (a state of mind and related behavior pattern) which is appropriate to the reality of any given situation.

Constructs and Concepts of TA

Berne chose the terms, Parent, Adult and Child, to represent three distinct states of mind and their related behavior patterns as they occur phenomonologically (Berne, 1961). These he termed ego states. Berne explained that when one observes two people talking, one is seeing no less than three personality parts (ego states) in action. Figure 1 is a representation of how these ego states are divided into specific personality elements. (See Appendix A for a more complete listing of ego state behaviors).

Insert Figure 1 here

This study is primarily concerned with the adult ego state since it is this ego state which is most involved in the tasks required of a supervisor. Therefore the concept of Adult ego state will be expanded upon. The information-organizing Adult, or cognitive organizer as Weinstein (1976) refers to it, has three functions: (1) To select incoming audible material; to compare what's being said with his/her own opinions, feelings, and knowledge of what is true; to note which facets to explore more thoroughly later; and to clarify what the speaker is saying; (2) To check what his/her own ego states have to say about the incoming material and its fit with reality; (3) To decide which material to respond to and to select the appropriate ego state from which to respond to the sender of the message (Bennett, 1976). Weinstein (1976) further

elaborates on the importance of the Adult, likening it to the executive being in control of a situation, not in the sense of dogmatism, but in the sense of rational decision-making. He suggests that the Adult ego state is a mediator which resolves conflicts within a given individual which arise between the individual's Parent and Child ego states. The Adult with its rational powers is able to mediate between the two states of mind and select the one most appropriate for a given situation.

Advantage of TA Constructs and Conceptualizations

TA has two advantages: it is more differentiating, and it is easily accessible to lay people (Weinstein, 1976). Studies by Parsons (1976), Field (1979), and Thomson (1972) suggest that the concepts are learnable and the language identifiable, i.e., the language used can be attached to a particular ego state and can be differentiated on such a basis. The Blumberg dichotomy of direct and indirect, while it is workable, has not proven empirically "teachable and applicable" because of the ambiguity and interpretability of the verbal feedback (Loye, 1970; Evans, 1972; Zeichner, 1984). The use of TA analysis, on the other hand, permits the supervisor to assess the communication setting and concent and to adjust the communication interaction. Such deliberate language usage reflects the supervisor's use of his/her Adult decision-making cognitive and rational thought processes which are central to maintaining productive communication. This approach is useful for all levels of supervision including the supervision of new instructors or student teachers as well as tenured teachers.

Methods and Techniques

A non-equivalent control group design involving graduate students in a

beginning supervision course was used to study the effect of instruction in transactional analysis on a supervisor's use of productive communication tranactions. The subjects consisted of fifty-two teachers, enrolled in two introductory supervision classes at Glassboro State College, Glassboro, New Jersey. Both the experimental and control groups engaged in the standard course of instruction in supervision. However, the experimental group received a treatment involving twelve units of training in transactional analysis communication skills including lectures, readings, role playing, analyses of verbal scripts, and listening triads.

Tape recorded supervisory critical incidents were used to stimulate supervisory responses from participants in both the experimental and control groups. Five different supervisory dramas were developed. Ideas for the conference content came from three sources: the prior work of Pajak and Glickman (1984); interviews with instructional supervisors; and verbatims of actual post-observation supervisory conferences (Johnston, 1984).

Each taped simulation included introductory information concerning the supervisor, supervisee, and the nature of the problem being addressed. The procedure used to elicit responses to the audio tapes involved the subjects hearing the supervisor's opening remarks which set the tone for the interaction. Once the supervisee on the audio tape responded, the tape recording stopped for two minutes, and each subject recorded in writing what he/she would say to the supervisee if he/she were the supervisor. Thus each participant assumed the position of supervisor in responding to the supervisee. This process continued for four exchanges.

The simulations occurred at five regular intervals during the course of the semester. The data involved 1,040 responses.

The 1,040 written responses of the experimental and control groups were coded by four raters (educators and clinicians) trained in TA communication. The coding of the responses used a dichotomous basis of productive and non-productive transactions. Carefully structured protocols were used as the basis for rating each response. Cue words were cited and scripted phrases suggested as indications of productive and non-productive responses for each incident (Kahler, 1977; Carr-Smith, 1978). Interrater agreeement exceeded 90%.

Productive transactions were coded for each respondent for each simulation. Data were analyzed using ANCOVA. ANCOVA's were run for Simulations II - V with Group as the independent variable, productive transactions as the independent variable, and Simulation I as the Covariate. Thus the initial difference between groups was controlled statistically.

Insert Tables 1-4 here

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is three-fold. The primary significance is practical. The treatment worked; the training trained. Supervisors under experimental conditions learned both how to analyze transactions and how to engage in productive transactions. The extent to which the training effect worked went beyond statistical significance to practical significance (McNamara, 1978). As noted, training in TA

accounted for 70% of the difference between the experimental and the control groups' use of productive transactions on the posttest.

Secondly the data suggest that TA training, which uses a framework of observable behaviors as a part of developing an individual's cognitive awareness of communication, is viable i.e., that protocols which rely upon TA verbal behavior cues provide a consistent and usable form of interpersonal communication analysis. These protocols are not only applicable in social contexts as provided by the audiotapes, but they are also useful for analyzing response data. In other words, the results of this study suggest that there is a process of interpersonal communication analysis which is systematic and which takes into consideration both the content and the process of the verbal exchange. The validation of this study's methodology provides impetus for further studies which otherwise might become bogged down in the cumbersome analyses as attempted in previous studies. Thus a significant secondary outgrowth of this study is the development of training materials, supervisory tape simulations, and communication analysis protocols for use in educational settings and/or future studies. Such materials provide for extended training opportunities in supervisory instruction as opposed to minimal intervention or one-shot in-service workshops.

Thirdly, while it would seem that TA training in productive interpersonal communication has implications for all of educational administration, it has particular applicability to supervision. Such training appears to have the potential for enhancing any type of supervision: clinical, collaborative, or highly structured. In other words, whether doing the Hunter model, the Cogan model, or some other approach,

productive communications which leave the supervisor and supervisee in tact as professionals, able to problem solve and reflect upon their work as rational and productive individuals, appears to be the course to pursue.

Consequently what has been learned from this study might be applied to teacher training programs as well as supervisory instruction. Clearly training in productive communication holds the key to much of what administration is all about. The training insights gleaned from this study could be employed in both the instructional modes of teacher preparatory programs as well as graduate courses in instructional supervision. What would be most innovative would be to yoke a teacher internship or practicum with a supervisory practicum in which both are trained in TA and observed to see if the outcome yields a more positive and satisfactory response to supervision. Such an approach would address the teacher before he/she is scripted to see supervision as a management ploy of the organization rather than as a means of professional development in education. On the other hand, such an approach would provide the supervisor with communication skills for doing what Sergiovanni and Starrett described earlier in this paper: bringing the two worlds of administration and teaching closer together through improved interpersonal communication. The supervisor would have an opportunity to learn to address the language of both worlds from a productive perspective. The benefits of such joint training would be evidenced in improved teacher/supervisor morale, more collaborative working relationships, and possibly more productive classroom learning as well as student/teacher interaction.

For the public school sector another important benefit of this approach is the effectiveness and efficiency of it. TA is learnable; it is not highly technical. The training hours are minimal with maximum benefits accruing from its implementation at all levels of the educational organization.

A further study might concentrate on a replication of this study and a refinement of the instruments used for training, data collection, and transaction assessment. The potential which such work holds might well be manifested in the development of training materials for use in both teacher preparatory training programs, courses in instructional supervision, courses in tape supervision, and district in-service training.

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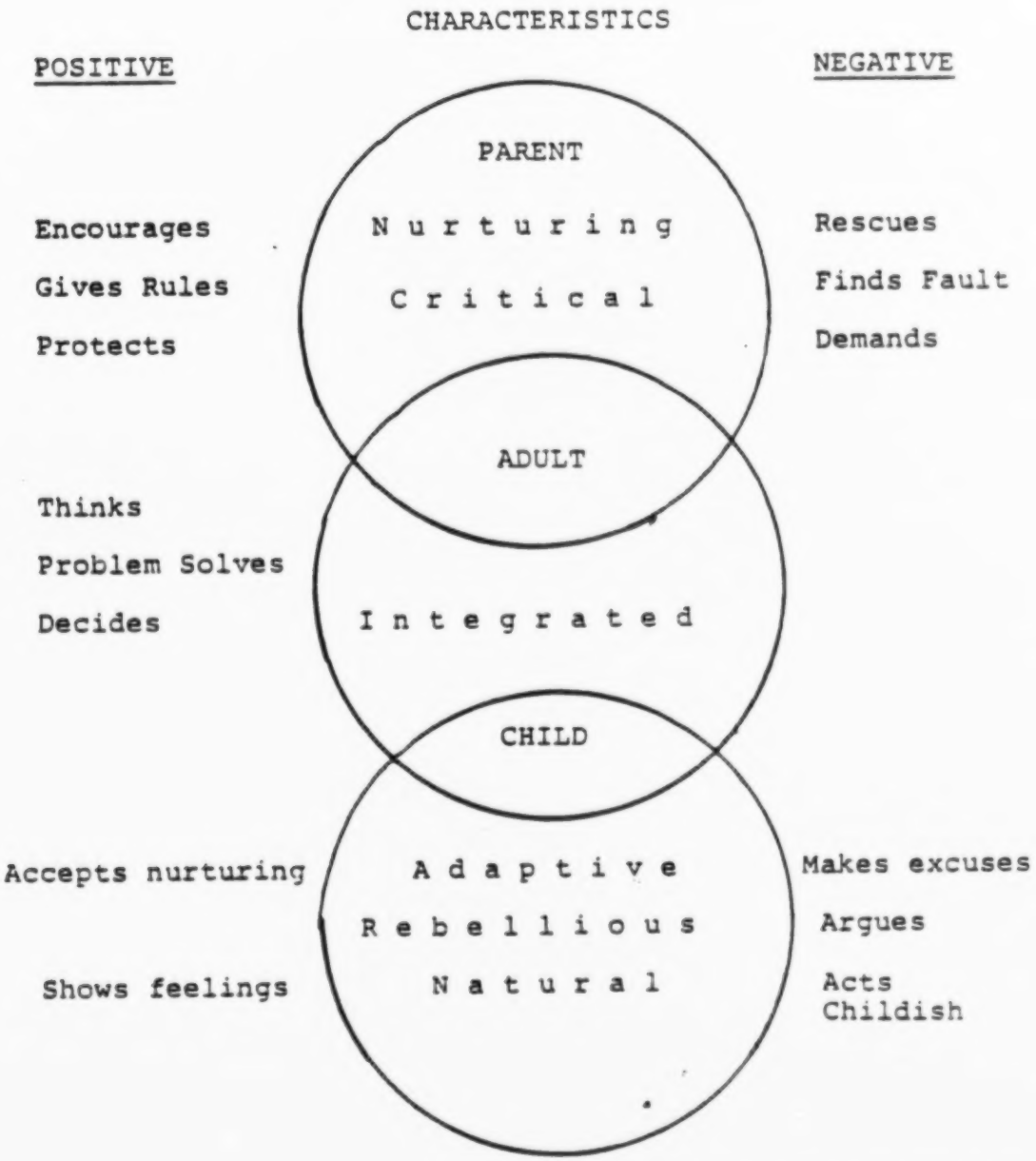

Figure 1 Parent, adult, child ego state model.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Supervisor's Productive Responses (Observed and Adjusted)

	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Observed X(SD)	Adjusted X(SD)	Observed X(SD)	Adjusted X(SD)
Pre-test Sim. I	1.16(.85)		.74(1.02)	
Sim. II	1.24(1.09)	1.11(.20)	.89(1.15)	1.00(.19)
Sim. III	.84(1.03)	.81(.17)	.37(.63)	.39(.16)
Sim. IV	2.12(1.27)	2.10(.20)	.41(.64)	.41(.19)
Posttest Sim. V	2.68(1.07)	2.63(.17)	.22(.58)	.27(.16)

Table 2

Analysis of Covariance Productive Response by Group, Control Sim. I, ANCOVA 1 for Sim. II, Productive; ANCOVA 2 for Sim. III, Productive

Source	df	s.s.	m.s.	R-squared	F	p
Group	1	.158	.997	.24	.16	.69
Sim. IP	49					

F (1,49)=4.04 .95

ANCOVA 2 for Sim. III, Productive

Source	df	s.s	m.s.	R-squared	F	p
Group	1	2.28	.719	.08	3.17	.08
Sim. IP	49					

F (1,49)=4.04 .95

Table 3

Analysis of Covariance Productive Response by Group, Control Sim. 1, ANCOVA 3 for Sim. IV, Productive

	df	s.s	m.s	R-squared	F	p
Group	1	35.27	1.00	.43	35.26	.01*
Sim. IP	49					

F (1,49)=4.04 *Indicates significance at .05.

Table 4

Analysis of Covariance Productive Response by Group, Control Sim. 1, ANCOVA 4 for Sim. V, Productive

	df	s.s.	m.s.	R-squared	F	p
Group	1	69.07	.69	.70	99.75	.01*
Sim. IP	49					

F (1,49)=4.04 .95 *Indicates significance at .05

APPENDIX A

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS EGO STATES

People have six different personalities (ego states). Three of these are productive in almost all situations, and three are non-productive in almost all situations.

PRODUCTIVE EGO STATES

The Nurturing Parent

The nurturing parent is empathetic and understanding.

It is sensitive and caring in a non-demanding manner.

The Natural Child

The natural child is spontaneous, eager, and curious.

It embodies all emotions and expressions of feeling.

The Adult

The adult is logical, reasonable, and rational.

It stores, processes and sends out information.

It helps the individual decide how to act and respond.

NON-PRODUCTIVE EGO STATES

The Critical Parent

The critical parent communicates using drivers.

It draws individuals into child-parent behaviors.

It is often demanding, sarcastic, and authoritarian.

The Rebellious Child

The rebellious child is often angry and negative.

It rebels by doing things differently or poorly.

It rebels by procrastinating and forgetting.

It says its not going to listen or agree with you.

The Adaptive Child

The adaptive child whines and makes excuses.

It says, "I can't" when it means, "I won't."

It is very careful and self-protective.

The key to productive communication is to activate the three productive ego states as much as possible and to deactivate the non-productive ego states as much as possible. Matching an ego state response to the reality of a given situation is the underlying rationale for productive communication transactions.

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF TA IDENTIFIERS

ELEMENT	PARENT		ADULT		CHILD	
	Nurturing	Critical		Natural	Adaptive	Rebellious
	Good!	should,	how	Wow!	Why me?	No way!
Words	Nice!	must,	what	Fantastic	It wasn't	Make me!
	Cute!	ought,	when	Neat!	my fault.	Oh, you
	Splendid!	have to,	where	I feel..	Help me!	think so
		never,	who			
		always,	I think			
		everyone				
		knows, why				
		in the world?				

DRIVER CUES

Drivers	Words	Speech Patterns
Be perfect	of course	Over qualify; cover all bases;
	obviously	Tell more than asked; just right,
	clearly	careful phrasing
	Big words	People must understand me
Try hard	It's hard	Don't answer questions directly;
	I can't	Repeat questions;
	I'll try	Insert parenthetical thoughts.
	Why don't you	Instead of giving direction
Please me	Can you	Seeks approval; Don't you think?
	Could you	How am I doing?
	You know	
	Kind of	

	Sort of	
Hurry up	Let's go	Rapidity of speech;
	Got to hustle	Never enough time
Be strong	No comment	Never personalize; much use of
	I don't care	its and "they"s.